INSCRIPTIONS

ON THE SABAEAN BRONZE HORSE

OF THE DUMBARTON OAKS

COLLECTION

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A FEW days before I left Italy in October 1953, Professor G. Levi Della Vida, of the University of Rome, informed me of the existence in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington of a magnificent bronze horse, bearing South-Arabian inscriptions which were still undeciphered (fig. 37), and I am very grateful to him for this valuable information. The horse was already known by a photograph reproduced by José Pijoán, Summa Artis. Historia General del Arte, t. XII, *Arte Islámico* (Madrid, 1949) p. 10, fig. 20.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Elizabeth Bland, Registrar and Assistant for the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, with whose kind assistance I was able to learn the provenance and subsequent history of the horse.

This bronze, rearing horse, broken into numerous pieces, was found in the vicinity of Ṣanʿāʾ. The fragments were first seen, about 1929, in Cairo in the shop of a dealer, from whom they were bought by an antiquarian in New York, who assembled them. Later, in 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss purchased the horse for the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. Judging from the photographs showing the separate fragments, the restoration was wonderfully done, but, unfortunately, the saddle is still missing. The fore part of the horse leans to the right. Its dimensions are 1.06 m. in length and 1.02 m. in height. The catalogue quotation, "D.O. 38.12," is written on the left side of the hoof of the left hind paw.

Three inscriptions are found on this beautiful horse: A and B on the left shoulder, and C on the left of the rump (figs. 42, 38, 39). The marks on the back of the right ankle have no meaning; they are only traces. In spite of many attempts to read them, these three inscriptions remained undeciphered. However, C could have been read from the photographs made by Dumbarton Oaks, and also B. But a part of A could not possibly have been deciphered without seeing the original. The difficulty of deciphering A is due to the thinness of the tracing, and also to the new forms of several characters.

For the authorization to decipher these inscriptions and to publish them, I am especially indebted to Mr. John S. Thacher, Director of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, who greatly facilitated my work.

I. TRANSCRIPTION AND TRANSLATION OF THE TEXTS, AND COMMENTARY

Jamme 489: [1] *Text A*; finely engraved.

It is quite impossible to give accurate measurements for this inscription

[1] For Jamme 1–482, see footnote 3 of A. Jamme, *Antiquités funéraires épigraphiques oatabanites* (= Jamme 463–8; to be published).

because of the irregularity of the area, which is about 18 cm. in length and 10.5 cm. in breadth (fig. 42). *Drawing*: the dimensions of each letter were taken separately as exactly as possible; the edges of the different fragments are indicated by the black lines, and the damaged places by the hatchings (figs. 40, 41).

1. *hwf͟tt/yh⌐’d̲n⌐[/]ġymn/qwl/š̌*
2. *bn/ᴌġᴖ[ymn]ᴌ/b̲ᴖnʳ/⌐rh’l/ᴌ’ᴖšwʿ/dm’d̲n[m/h]*
3. *qᴌnᴖ[y/rhm]n[n]/frsy[nh]n/wrkbhmy/ʿ*
4. *[dy/mhrmn/]qᴌnᴖtn/⌐dm⌐drhm/lwf*
5. *[yh/wwfy/ᴌbh̲ᴖ⌐r⌐/ᴌġᴖʳy⌐mn/wᴌ’b̲l̲ᴖ/d̲*
6. *[qny/wlwfy]⌐/’b⌐yt̲h⌐mw⌐/⌐wql[hmw/w]*
7. *[wldhmw/wlw]fy/kl/d̲qnyw/w[yqnynn]*
8. *[wlhmr/hwf]’͟tt/rd̲w/lbh⌐/⌐[wl/š]*
9. *[dh/d̲t/nʿm]t/wl/yd̲ʿ/drh[mw/]w*
10. *[šn’hmw/bsm/’l]h[n/d̲s]m[yn/w’rd̲n]*

1. Hawfʿatat Yuhaʾdin Ġaymân, ruler of the tri-
2. be of Ġaymân, son of Rah̲ʾil ʾAšwaʿ, this (man) of [the clan of] Muʾad̲in[um, has de-]
3. di(ca)[ted to Rah̲ma]n[ân] the[se] two horses and their saddles
4. [in the temple (called)] Qantân of (the clan of) Mad̲rah̲um, for the protec-
5. [tion of himself and for the protection of] the country of Ġaymân and of the camels [he has]
6. [in his possession, and for the protection of] their houses and of [their] ruler [and]
7. [their sons, and for the pro]tection of all that they have in possession and [shall possess,]
8. [and that He (= Rah̲manân) may vouchsafe Hawf]ʿatat the grace of His heart [and that He may feli-]
9. [citate him in whatever good has happened,] and that He may destroy [their] foes [and]
10. [their enemies. By the God, this of the heaven and the earth.]

L. 1: *hwf͟tt*: well known personal name; cf., e.g., RÉS 3512/2 (H̲ad̲rami); 2771/2 (Minaean); 3902, no. 7 (Qatabanian) and 3955/1 (Sabaean). — *yh’d̲n*: as is shown by the drawing, the bronze piece bearing the lower half of *d̲n* has been put too low; the upper part of the last three letters is missing; the first letter could be restored as ’, *k* or *s*; but, the second is certainly *d̲* (cf. the two *d̲* at the end of l. 2), and the third must be *n*. *yh’d̲n* is a new personal name derivated from the root *’d̲n*, as e.g. *y’d̲n* (cf. RÉS 3878/19: Qatabanian). At first sight, *y’d̲n* belongs to the Irst form of the verb, and *yh’d̲n* to the IV.; but *y’d̲n* could also be considered as the contracted tran-

scription of *yh'ḏn*, like Sabaean *y'mn* and *yh'mn*.[2] — *ġymn*: tribal name because of l. 1–2 (cf. CIH 661/3); also the name of an ancient city located about 12 km. southeast of Ṣanʿâ'.[3] There is no place for *ḏ* before *ġymn*; on the other hand, the mention of *dm'ḏn*[*m*] in l. 2 excludes the restoration of this letter. The personal name *ḥwfṯt/yh'ḏn/ġymn* fits very well with the interpretation I presented of the second and third names.[4] — *qwl*; cf., e.g., RÉS 3300 C.

L. 1–2: For a professional title inserted between the name of a person and the mention of his filiation; cf. RÉS 4916/1–2 (Ḥaḍrami).

L. 2: *ġymn*: The restoration of this name fits perfectly with the blank and with the remaining damaged letter. — *bn*: as it is shown by the drawing, the inferior part of *n* has been put too low. — *rh'l*: new personal name, the first component of which is a form derived from the root *rḥḥ*; cf. *rḥḥn* in Jamme 326/2; examples of this nominal formation: the root *hll* and *hl'ly* "Hil'ilay," name of the Sabaean moon deity;[5] the root *ʿzz* and the personal name *'l'z* "Il'azz" (cf. RÉS 3902 bis, no. 130/1). — *'sw'*; cf., e.g., RÉS 2633/1. —*dm'ḏnm*: the final blank of l. 2 requires three characters; thus, I restore *m/h*; *m'ḏnm*, also derived from *'ḏn*, is already known as a clan name in RÉS 4063/2.

L. 3: According to the accurate measurement of the space between *q* and the vertical stroke before *frsynhn*, the original text contained eight characters; the seventh letter is *n*. The only name of deity, which exactly accounts for the two preceding facts, is *rḥmnn*, the name of the Christian God.[6] — *frsynhn*: for the dual form in *ynhn*, cf. *ṣlmynhn* in RÉS 3993/3. — *rkbhmy*; cf. CIH 306/4–5: *ḏn*[*/fr*]*sn/wrkbhw* "this horse and its saddle"; but, in Jamme 513/9–10, *rkb* is to be related to the Arabic nouns *rakûbun* and *rakkâbun* "cavalier, the man who mounts an animal."

L. 3–4: ʿ . . . . *qntn/dmḏrhm*. *qntn* is the name of a measure in CIH 541/122, and is translated "centumpondium" by *CIH*[7] or "duo sextarii" by C. Conti Rossini;[8] in this text, *qntn* is used for measuring food

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[2] Cf., e.g., *nš'krb/y'mn/yhrhb* in Fakhry 3/1, and *nš'krb/yh'mn/yhrhb* in MaMB 150/14 and 178/15.

[3] Cf. *CIH*, I, 82, and H. von Wissmann-M. Höfner, *Beiträge zur historischen Geographie des vorislamischen Südarabien* (Mainz, 1953), 22.

[4] Cf. my book, *Pièces épigraphiques de Heid bin ʿAqîl, la nécropole de Timnaʿ* (*Hagr Kohlân*) (Louvain, 1952), 8–10.

[5] Cf. my paper, "Le panthéon sud-arabe préislamique d'après les sources épigraphiques," *Le Muséon*, LX (1947) 70, and footnote 72.

[6] Cf. my publication, *Classification descriptive générale des inscriptions sud-arabes* (Tunis, 1948), 69–72.

[7] T. II, p. 292 B.

[8] *Chrestomathia arabica meridionalis epigraphica* (Roma, 1931), 233 A.

like flour. *qnt* is also mentioned in RÉS 2860/2, 5 with the meaning of "silo." Neither of the two preceding interpretations is, of course, acceptable in the present inscription. Because of RÉS 4084/3, ' may be considered the first letter of the preposition '*dy* "in," followed by the name of the sanctuary in which the offering was brought. In addition, the blank at the beginning of l. 3, compared with that of l. 2, requires nine characters. Consequently, I suggest restoring '*dy/mḥrmn/* "in the temple," and interpreting *qntn* as the proper name of this sanctuary. *mḥrm* seems to be chosen rather than *mknt* "cella" (cf. RÉS 4084/3–4 and *RÉS*, V, 280), because of its more frequent occurrence in the South-Arabian inscriptions.

L. 4: *mḏrḥm*: family name in CIH 40/1.

L. 5: The blank in the beginning requires eight characters; naturally I restore *yh/wwfy/.* — *bḥr* (cf. RÉS 3945/5) must be translated "country, territory" instead of "sea" (cf. CIH 308/17).

L. 5–6: '*bl/ḏ* . . . . . /'*bythmw*. The blank in the beginning of l. 6 may require nine characters; *ḏ* is not the first letter of the proper name of the camel, because this substantive would have the article (cf. '*bln/ḏfr* in RÉS 4144/5); and finally, '*bythmw*, which is not introduced by a preposition or the copula *w* "and," is the direct object of a missing verb or, more probably, genitive after the substantive *wfy*. Taking into account the three preceding facts, the interpretation could possibly be sought in two different directions. 1) The individual term '*bl*, as well as *frsynhn*, is the direct object of *hqny* (l. 2–3), and *ḏ* is the first letter of *ḏhbn* "in bronze" rather than the demonstrative pronoun introducing *ṣrf* "silver" (*ḏṣrfn*; cf., e.g., CIH 407/6; or *ḏṣrfm*; cf., e.g., RÉS 4139/2). Concerning '*bl/ḏhbn*, cf. the following parallel *ṣlm/ḏhbn* in, e.g., RÉS 3902, no. 86/3 (Qatabanian). *ḏhb* must be preferred to *ṣrf*, because the most important offering, that of the two horses, is also made in bronze. According to this interpretation, the restoration of the text would be '*bl/ḏ[hbn/lwfy]/'bythmw*, "and a camel in br[onze for the protection of] their houses." The insertion of a second offering in the middle of the reasons for thanksgiving or requests is contrary to the formula used in dedicatory inscriptions; the mention of an offering, which may contain objects of various kinds, customarily precedes the enumeration of the above-mentioned reasons for thanksgiving or requests.[9] On the other hand, the general meaning of l. 5–6 would break down, and it is quite difficult to find any reason for justifying the mention of a second offering. 2) '*bl*, like *bḥr*, is genitive after *wfy* (l. 5). In this hypothesis, it seems difficult to make '*bl* singular; it is collective or plural. However, the plural of

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[9] Jamme, *Classification*, 32.

'bl is "bl (cf., e.g., RÉS 3943/3) and the collective noun for camels is b'r (cf., e.g., RÉS 4143/3). But, as 'b[l is a plural in the unpublished Sebaean text Jamme 576/15, this interpretation may be kept and developed as follows: ḏ would introduce the verb qny with Hawfʿaṭat as subject, and 'bythmw would be preceded by wlwfy, "and for the protection of." This restoration of the text: qny/wlwfy, fills the blank very well.

L. 6: The pronominal suffix of 'bythmw refers to the people of the tribe of Gaymân. — qlhmw; cf. RÉS 3990/9; the plural suffix is required by 'bythmw, and also by the meaning of the sentence.

L. 6–7: The word following qlhmw is probably another noun because of wlwfy/kl . . . of l. 7, and consequently this noun, as well as the two preceding words, will be determined by the plural. These reasons justify the restoration of /wql[hmw/w . . . hmw/wlw]fy/. The remaining blank cannot possibly require more than three letters; wld could very easily be restored. This word frequently occurs in such contexts, and may be a singular or plural noun; however, the plural is also 'wld and w'ld. The last form is mentioned in several texts of the late Sabaean period, but also in Jamme 348/3–4. This inscription was found in the cemetery of Timnaʿ and thus belongs to the period preceding the fall of the Qatabanian kingdom.[10]

L. 7: Cf. CIH 609/6.

L. 8: Cf. the parallel wlḥmrhmw/ḏsmy/rḏw/lbhw "and that Ḏû-Samâwî may vouchsafe them the grace of his heart" (CIH 535/7). Instead of rḏw, several inscriptions present the writing rḏy (cf., e.g., CIH 335/5); another example of the alternation of the weak letters w and y at the end of a word [11] is ḥẓww/ḥẓyhmw (cf. CIH 660/2).[12]

L. 8–9: For the blank ending with the letter t, I suggest the following restoration: [wl/sʿ (l. 9) dh/ḏt/nʿm]t (cf., e.g., RÉS 3990/9–10). There is an obvious objection: the preceding expression is always followed by wtnʿmn, and in the present text wlsʿdh/nʿmtm (cf., e.g., RÉS 3993/6) would be expected; but this is impossible. My restoration seems quite possible, because the ideas expressed by nʿm and rḏw are very often united (cf., e.g., RÉS 4155/3); wl/sʿdh/ḏt/nʿmt, which perfectly fills the blank, would be an alternative reading for wl/sʿdh/nʿmtm, that is, the relative clause ḏt/nʿmt takes the place of the indeterminate noun nʿmtm.

L. 9: yḏʿ/ḏrh . . , cf., e.g., CIH 315/21–22: wwḏʿ/ . . . . . /kl/ ḏrhmw/wsn'hmw "et frangat . . . . . omnes adversarios ipsorum et hostes

[10] A. F. L. Beeston, Le Muséon, LXVI (1953) 178, and JRAS, April 1954, 61, footnote 1.

[11] M. Höfner, Altsüdarabische Grammatik (Leipzig, 1943), p. 94, § 78.

[12] = Jamme 411/2; cf. my paper, "Les antiquités sud-arabes du Museo Nazionale Romano" (to be published).

ipsorum." This expression is frequently mentioned at the end of dedicatory inscriptions, in which dr has the same meaning as kl/dr "every foe." The restoration of $mw/$ fills the blank in the end of l. 9 perfectly, and $šn'hmw$ is to be inserted at the beginning of l. 10. The plural pronominal suffix refers to Hawf'atat as well as to the tribe of Ġaymân.

L. 10: The end of the dedicatory inscriptions ordinarily contains an invocation to one or several deities, and the blank between h and m requires four characters. In this text, the invocation would not, of course, include the name of a pagan divinity. The final invocation could begin with $bsm/$ $rhmnn$, "in the name of Rahmanân" (cf. RÉS 3904/16), or with $'lsm/rhmnn$, "In the name of Rahmanân" (cf. the unpublished inscription Jamme 541/4).[13] The h could belong to $'lhn$ "the God," and the m to smy "heaven." Consequently, I propose to restore $bsm/'l]h[n/ds]m[yn/w'rḍn$, which is based on the following expressions: $'lhn/b'l/smyn/w'rḍn$ (cf. CIH 540/81–82), $rhmnn/b'l/smyn/w'(rḍ)n$ (cf. RÉS 4919/5), $rhmnn/mr'(/s)myn/w'$ $(rḍ)[n]$ (cf. RÉS 4069/11), $rhmnn/ḏbsmyn$ (cf. CIH 542/6–7). In all these quotations, smy and $'rḍ$ are in the determinate state; the following expression presents smy in the indeterminate state: $mr'h[mw/]ḏsmym$ (cf. Jamme 513/4–5). It is already known that $b'l$, mr' and $ḏ$ have the same meaning when they connect the appellation of a divinity with the name of its temple or other objects.[14] The restoration perfectly fills the three blanks in the line: between [$šn'hmw$] and h, between h and m, and between m and the end of the line.

Text B: in relief (figs. 38, 40, 41). Dimensions: 5 cm. × 2.5 cm.

$hw] f/š'h'm$ Haw]f [of the family of] Suh'amm.

. . . f: the right part of f is missing; its left central corner encroaches upon the vertical stroke, probably as a result of the soldering; for the personal name hwf; cf. RÉS 3902, no. 69 (Qatabanian).

$sh'm$: this new family name may be considered as formed from sh and $'m$, the name of the Qatabanian moon deity.[15] For sh, cf. the Arabic root shw, "to forget, to neglect." For the apocope of the third weak letter in a proper compound-noun, cf., e.g., $hy'wm$ in RÉS 4084/1; and for the interpretation of the second proper name added to the first without any conjunction, cf. my book *Pièces épigraphiques*, 7–10.

[13] Jamme, "Aperçu général des inscriptions copiées à Mâreb (Yémen)," *Académie Royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, 5ᵉ sér., XXXIII (1952), 297 and footnote 1. — $'lsm$ equals to lsm in CIH 539/4.
[14] Jamme, "Le panthéon," 64–65, footnote 24.
[15] Jamme, "Le panthéon," 78–80.

At first sight, it seems strange to find, in a Christian Sabaean inscription, a family name formed with the name of the Qatabanian moon deity. The Qatabanian kingdom had been destroyed a long time before the engraving of this inscription, it is true; but everybody knows how tenacious is the longevity of religious ideas and of proper names, and it may be added that only part of the country was certainly Christian.

Text C: finely engraved (figs. 39, 40, 41). Dimensions: 7.8 cm. × 1.8 on *m*.

šrḥb ⌈'⌉*l/* ⌈*d*⌉ *m'hr* Sarahbi'il, the (man) of [the tribe of] Mu'ahir. *šrḥb'l*, cf., e.g., CIH 130/2; this personal name was illustrated by three Sabaean kings of the late period: Šarahbi'il Yafûr (cf., e.g., CIH 540/1), Šarahbi'il Yakûr (cf., e.g., RÉS 2627/3), and Šarahbi'il Yakmul (cf., e.g., RÉS 2633/1). The approximate dates for these kings are respectively, the end of the first half of the fifth century A.D., the beginning of the second half of the same century, and the end of the first half of the sixth.[16]

ḏm'hr: for the interpretation of this *ḏ* and the references to the tribal name *m'hr*; cf. my book *Pièces épigraphiques*, pp. 18 f. and pp. 118–121.

II. EXPLANATIONS

The translation does not answer all the questions raised by the inscriptions; some explanations are needed for complete understanding of the texts in relation to the horse.

Value of Text A

The inscription is Sabaean and mentions the tribe of Ġaymân. This double fact bears out the above-mentioned notice concerning the origin of the horse.

The text is dedicatory and refers to the offering of two horses and their saddles. This point is important, for two inferences may be drawn from it. First, text A cannot have been added at a later period; its connection with the horse is evident. Second, the leaning posture of the horse is due to the existence of a second horse, which flanked the right side of the first horse; each one leaned towards the other. Further, this posture explains why the three texts were put on the left side of the first horse. Its right side was evidently hidden by the second horse, and thus was not easily accessible.

According to my restoration of the beginning of l. 3, the offering was brought to *rḥmnn*, which is the name of the Christian God, as well as *'lhn*

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[16] J. Ryckmans, *L'institution monarchique en Arabie méridionale avant l'Islam* (*Ma'în et Saba*) (Louvain, 1952), 339.

"the God," when no mention is made in the text of the three Divine Persons; it is also the name of the First Person of the Trinity.

This inscription is the first refering to an offering of a statue to the Christian God, and so proves that Christian South-Arabians had kept up not only the habit of offering statues, but also the common formula of the inscriptions used in those circumstances.[17]

Interpretation of text B

This text is in relief, and thus has been cast with the horse. *A priori*, B could be the name of the horse, or of the donor, or of the workman who made the piece.

The first hypothesis is quite impossible. Such a name never contains two parts; and as I have already pointed out in the commentary, the second name must be interpreted as a family name.

The second hypothesis is refuted by A/1, according to which the name of the donor is Hawf'aṭat Yuha'din Gaymân.

The third hypothesis must be accepted.

Interpretation of text C

This text, as well as A, is engraved and, like B, is an example of a very common formula to be understood as a visiting card. This formula is most often found on small tombstones and also in graffiti scratched on the rock scarps. Therefore C must be considered as the signature of the worker who engraved A. This interpretation is confirmed by the palaeography of both texts.

III. PALAEOGRAPHY [18]

The palaeography of these inscriptions is valuable, for the new palaeographical whole of A is contemporary with the late script of C and of the archaistic lettering of B.

Text A

As a whole the palaeography of this inscription, exhibiting very artistic letters, is new and presents different kinds of forms and lettering and at the same time, a strong tendency toward uniformity.

The form of several letters, e.g., š and t, is the same as that of the classical period; but the form of others, e.g., the lower part of ' and s, refers us to that of the latest period.

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[17] Cf. the premature conclusion drawn by J. Ryckmans in *L'institution monarchique*, 230.

[18] For a sketch of the evolution of the South-Arabian palaeography, see Jamme, *Pièces épigraphiques*, 11–13.

The central part of letters like *š* and *t* evidently belongs to the single-line lettering. In opposition to this, both upper and lower parts of the same letters must be referred to the double-line forms. It is, of course, unlikely that the engraver reproduced the edges of the deeply cut characters, because the central part of *š* and *t* also has two edges.

The study of the palaeography reveals a strong tendency toward uniformity behind the variety of forms, that is, the use of two strokes in tracing the characters (e.g., /) or a part of the letter (e.g., the upper part of *h*).

The above-mentioned facts render impossible the grouping of the letters in several series completely separated from each other. The alphabetical order usually adopted [19] provides a way to avoid the difficulty, but it is far too simple. There are, of course, many possible methods. My classification is based on the forms of the letters rather than on their lettering; for the lettering has less importance for the dating of the inscriptions than the forms of the characters. The double-line lettering was already used in the very first period; see Jamme 401 and 402, which are also inscriptions engraved on statues and which belong to the boustrophedon period.

The characters included in the **first** group show three different kinds of tracing: the single-line tracing, the double-line tracing and a mixture of both. Their forms resemble those of the classical period, although they present secondary characteristics.

Double-line tracing

w is a large ellipse with two small vertical strokes; cf. this letter in A.M. 335/10 [20] in which these strokes resemble the lateral edges of a double concave lens.

y is a flattened ellipse supported by a trapezoid. A small perfectly regular circle is inserted inside the ellipse, sometimes reaching the upper and lower sides of the ellipse (in *yh'dn* of l. 1) and sometimes only the lower side (in *ġymn* of l. 1). The lateral and inferior edges of the trapezoid are strong concave lines; the bottom is extremely wide. Compare this letter in A.M. 335/10 and 203.[21] The first example is not balanced because the right vertical part of it is wider than the left. In A.M. 203 however the character is very primitive in comparison with that of the present text; the upper part is almost a circle and the lower part is made up of two vertical lines bent at

[19] Jamme, *Pièces épigraphiques*, 3.

[20] *Le Muséon*, LXII (1949) 62, 64–65, 79, and pl. II. The drawing (p. 79) is not very elaborate, and the transcription of this inscription (p. 62) contains three mistakes: l. 1; *dty* instead of *dtw* (cf. the photograph in pl. II); l. 8, *lytb* instead of *lystb*: l. 10, *wd'n* instead of *'dwn*.

[21] *Le Muséon*, LII (1939) 69–70, and pl. VI.

the lower end in opposite directions, the extremities of which are reunited by a horizontal straight line.

‘ is equivalent to the upper part of *y*, the first type as far as the small circle is concerned.

/ is a protracted rectangle, each side of which is a marvelous concave line; cf. that of A.M. 203 which has the same form as the lower part of *y* in the present text.

l is a / with a small upper edge; a triangle, of which the edges are concave lines, hangs obliquely on the left corner of the upper edge.

q is exactly /, the centre of which is occupied by a small ‘.

r is made up by a large concave line, the ends of which are bent and to which another strong concave line is added. The form of *r* in *šhrʿly* (cf. CIH 397/2) is very close to that of the present *r*; but its left central stroke is adventitious, because this part is missing in all the other *r*'s of this text.

t̲ is / on the extremities of which a ‘ is placed.

Single-line tracing

f is a beautiful lozenge with the same characteristics as /; the breadth is about half the length. A small vertical line is sometimes added inside the middle of the letter (cf. *hwf̲tt* of l. 1), and sometimes is missing (cf. *lwf[yh]* of l. 4–5).

m has the same form as in the classical period (cf., e.g., Jamme 115); but in the present text a small vertical stroke is set in the middle of both upper and lower parts of the letter; cf. *m* of RÉS 4119, which has a long free stroke in its centre.

Mixture of both single-line and double-line tracings

The central part of *d̲*, *n*, *š* and *t*, and the extremities of *r* belong to the single-line form; but the other parts of these letters are in the double-line form.

The vertical middle part of *d̲* is made by two perfectly in-curved and separated strokes modeling the lateral sides of a double concave lens (cf. above *m* of A.M. 335/10), and reunited in their centre by two very small parallel straight lines leaning to the right. Each end of these central strokes is used as the lateral side of a triangle of which the other sides are also concave lines; however, the bottom of these triangles is in horizontal. Note that *d̲* at the end of l. 5 remained unfinished.

n is compounded by three portions. The upper part is an inversed triangle of which the sides are concave lines (cf. the left part of *l*); this triangle is supported by a small vertical straight line. The central part is an oblique
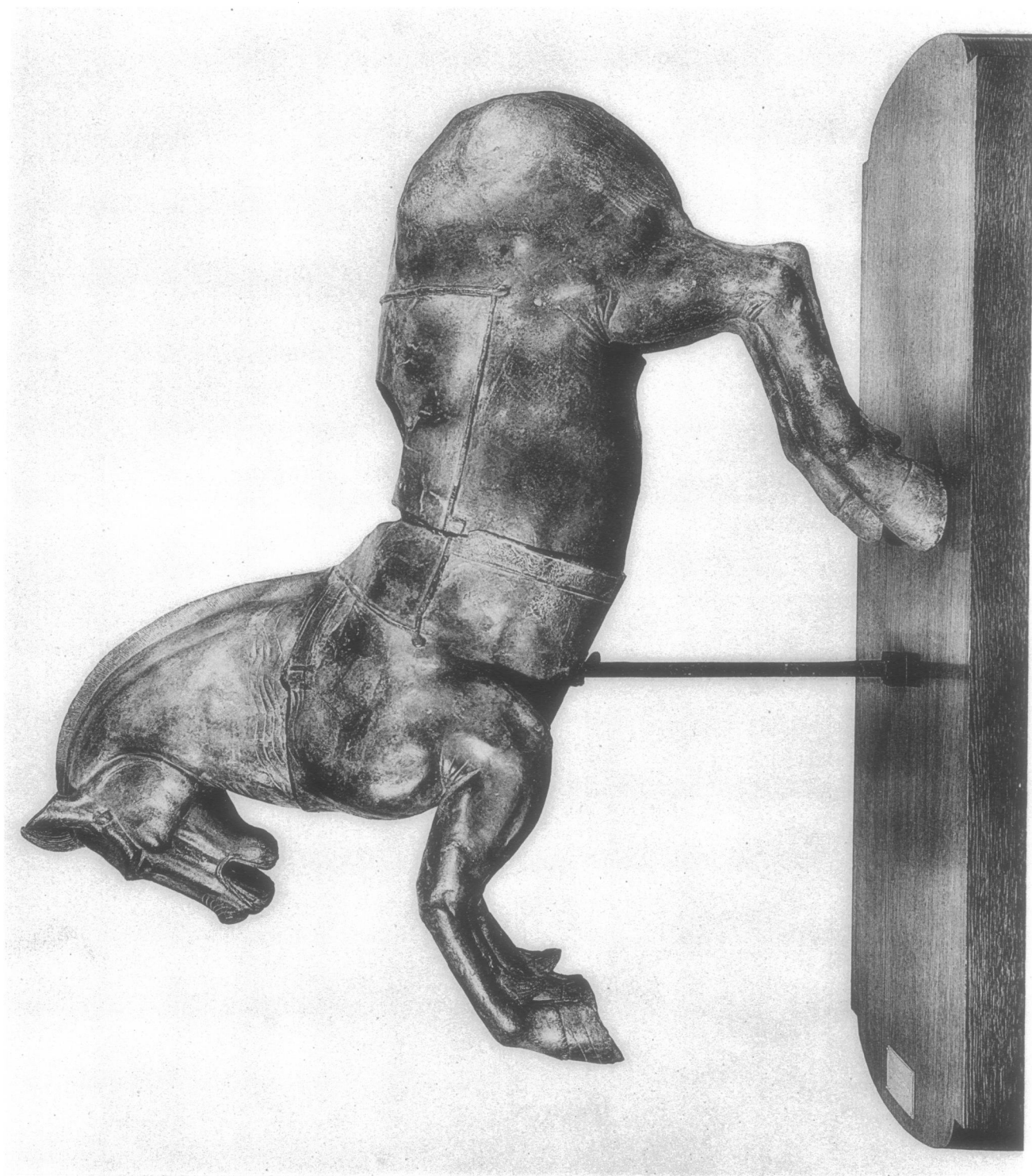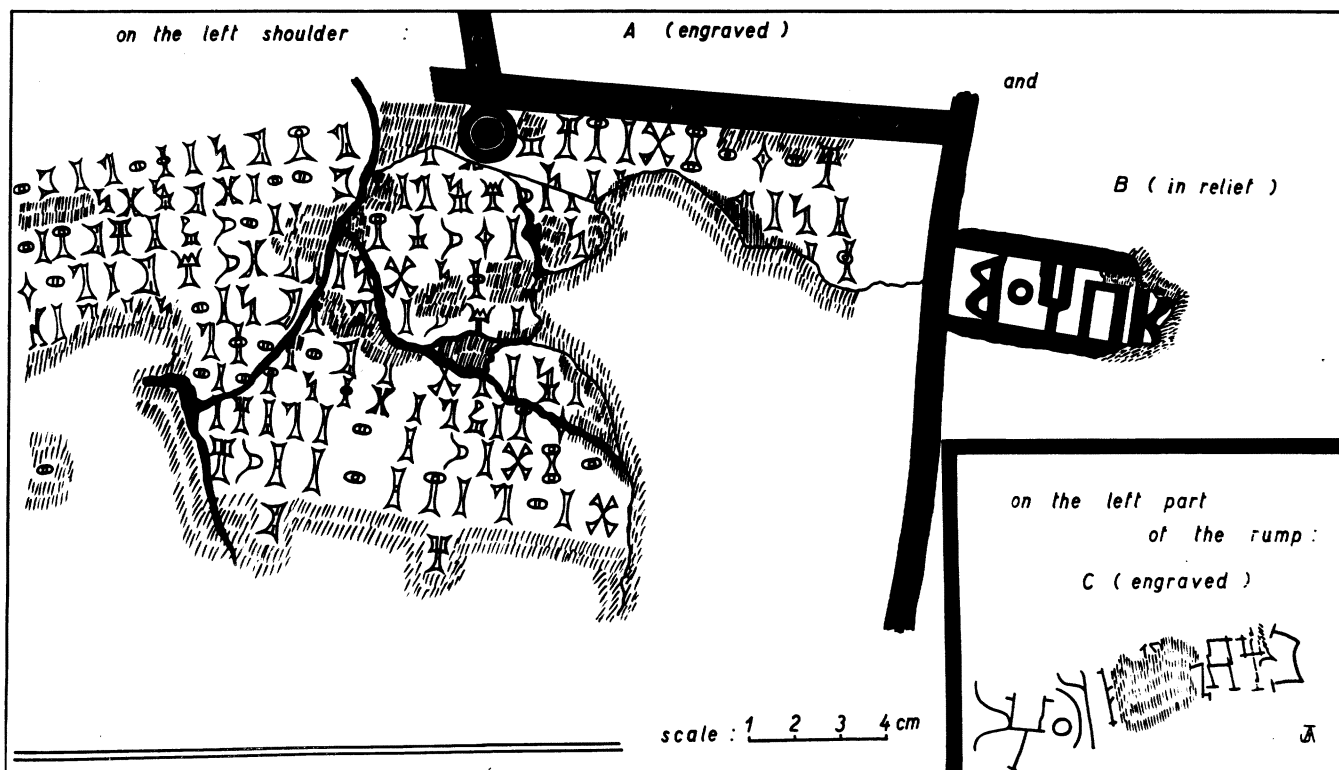
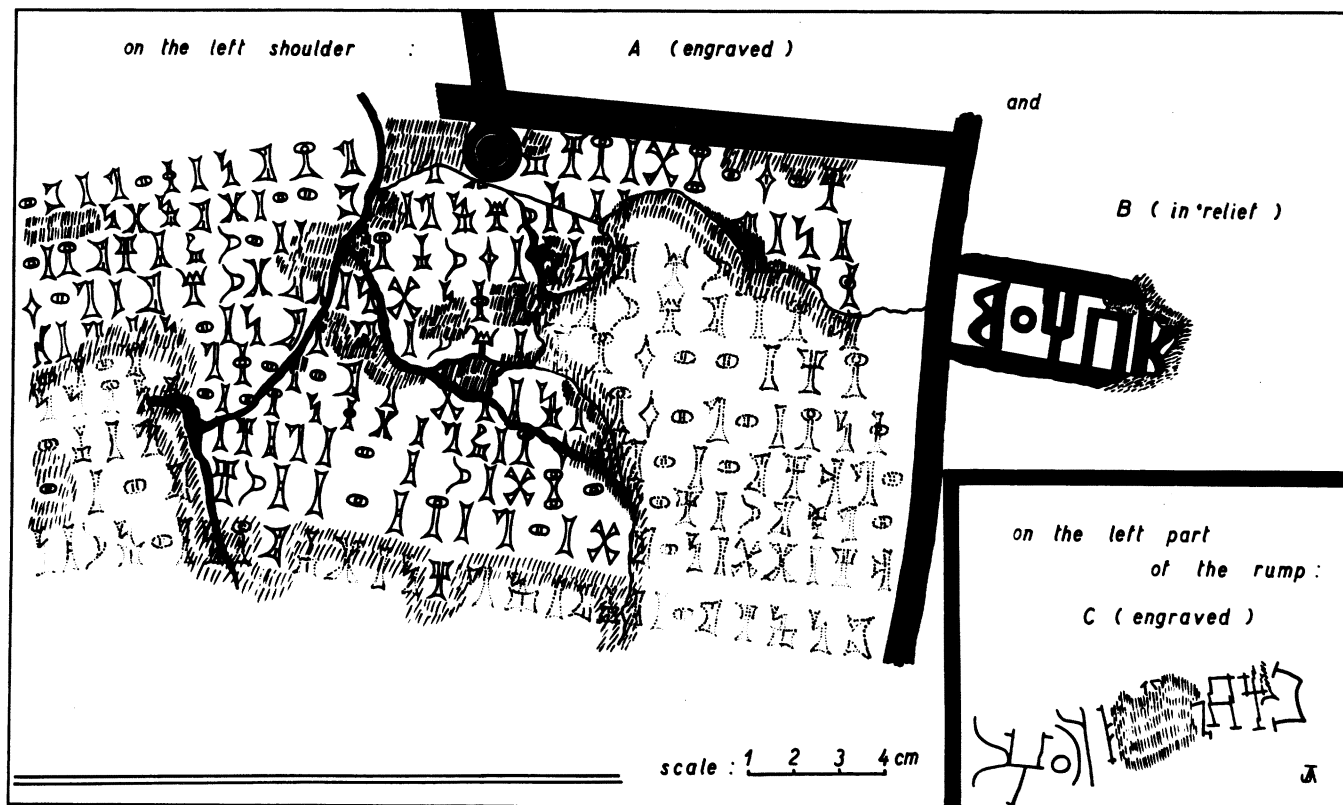37. Sabaean bronze horse, left profile. Dumbarton Oaks Collection.

38. Text B. Relief.

39. Text C. Engraving.

on the left shoulder   :   A (engraved)

and

B (in relief)

on the left part
of the rump :

C (engraved)

scale : 1 2 3 4 cm

40. Drawing of Inscriptions.

on the left shoulder   :   A (engraved)

and

B (in relief)

on the left part
of the rump :

C (engraved)

scale : 1 2 3 4 cm

41. Same as above, with Text A completed.

42. Text A. Engraving.

straight line leaning to the left. The lower part of the letter is equivalent to the lower part of /, the upper edge being the right end of the oblique central line.

The central part of š is a wide concave line on the extremities of which large triangles like the upper part of *n* are placed, almost horizontally.

The central part of *t* shows two oblique straight lines crossing each other at their centre. As in *d̲*, each end of these lines is used as the lateral side of a triangle of which the bottom is an oblique straight line and the second lateral side is a concave line (cf., e.g., Jamme 115).

The **second** group includes the letters of which part of the forms are new, and it must be compared with the lettering of the latest period. These letters may be distributed in three series, according to their exterior form: ', *k* and *s; h* and *ḥ; b, ġ* and *ḏ*. The last series is the most important palaeographical feature of this text and gives the key for decipherment of the inscription.

The form of the lower half of ', *k* and *s* is identical in the three letters; it is a square of which the sides are artistic concave lines, and which is divided into two equal portions by a vertical stroke. This stroke sometimes goes beyond the lower edge (see *rḥ'l* of l. 2) and sometimes does not (see *kl* of l. 7). This tracing must be compared with the same letters as they appear in the texts of the last palaeographical period. Note that the dimensions of this lower half are not identical in the three letters; they are bigger in ' than in *k* and *s*. The upper half of ' is a small *n*; that of *s* is the upper part of *n* supported by a long vertical stroke; finally, that of *k* is also equivalent to the upper part of *n*, but it is oblique, not vertical, and the line is convex and not concave.

The lower half of *h* and *ḥ* is equivalent to the same part of *y*. The upper half of *h* is formed by two identical elements placed in opposite directions; each portion is an irregular trapezoid to be described as follows: one lateral side is a straight line; the other lateral and the upper sides are concave lines; and, finally, the lower side is a straight horizontal line (cf. *hwf̲tt* of l. 1) or a slightly concave line (cf. *lbh* of l. 8). The two elements, separated by a small space and face each other on their straight-line lateral side, are reunited at the bottom by the prolongation of their lower sides in an uninterrupted line. The upper part of *ḥ* is really very ingenious. The bottom and the two lateral sides are beautiful concave lines; the inside of this incurved rectangular space of the upper side contains a design equivalent to a primitive š in a prone position so that its ends reach the ends of the lower edge of the rectangle.

b, ġ and *ḏ* are indisputably the most important letters of this text from

the palaeographical point of view; the accurate reading of b and d compared with /, and of $\dot{g}$ compared with l, gives the key for the deciphering of the text.

b, d and / (see above) are identical, as are $\dot{g}$ and l (cf. above), in respect to their outlines; this is an exciting palaeographical fact. It is possible to differentiate these characters because of the small strokes added inside the letters. $\dot{g}$ is a l, in which the concave line of the bottom supports a small vertical stroke; d is a /, in the centre of which two small horizontal strokes are placed; and finally, b is a /, the middle of which contains a small horizontal stroke, and the bottom of which supports a vertical line. In addition to that, b may be compared with that of A.M. 335/10 in which the two strokes adjoin each other; but the character does not have a horizontal line at the bottom.

Text B

The palaeography of this text is very simple. Most of the corners are square, except those of m and f; the length of the upper part of h exceeds half the letter, and that of s is about equivalent to 4/5 of the character.

The workman who made the horse was certainly not a specialist in writing; the lower part of s is well done, but the corners of m, the edges of h and especially the letter f are deficient in elegance and finish.

Text C

The tracing of this signature is characteristic of the lastest period, because of the small perpendicular strokes added to the ends of the straight lines, and especially because of the form of b. Cf. the unfinished d of A/5.

The palaeographical description of the three inscriptions showed three different types of script; there might therefore be an objection to dating them in the same period. This would be true, if the three texts had been produced by the same process. But, on the contrary, they belong to three different processes, each using its own technique; and that is precisely the explanation of the differences. *A priori*, it is much more difficult to cast an inscription (like B) than to engrave it (like A and C). To form small strokes and, *a fortiori*, beautiful concave lines is difficult enough; but to fashion the clay so that it reproduces such elegant lettering is quite impossible except with very large characters. Experience proves that texts cast in bronze, and engraved or deeply cut inscriptions, both of the same period, show different types of script. This affirmation is well illustrated by Jamme 120 and 121 (not yet published). These inscriptions belong to the same Qatabanian

period, for both are separated by only a few years, or possibly a few months. The former is a bronze inscription [22] and the second a deeply cut inscription.[23] The two letterings are quite different because of the difference in processes.

It is also evident that the lettering of an inscription like A must be more elaborate and more finished than a text like C; for the first is calligraphic and the second is not.

IV. DATING

The three inscriptions, and consequently the horse also, belong to the latest period of the Sabaean kingdom; that is to say between the fourth and the seventh centuries A.D. Proof of this claim can be found in: the palaeography of C; the form of various letters and parts of characters in A; and the mention of the name of the Christian God, Raḥmanân, to be restored in A/3.

It seems possible to establish more precisely the date mentioned above.

As I have already pointed out, A presents forms of letters belonging to two different periods. Such a palaeographical feature indicates a period of transition, and consequently would agree with a date near the beginning of the latest period. However, the finish of the characters, especially that of the most evolved letters like *b*, proves that this lettering was certainly not in its first stage.

On the other hand, the presence of the personal name *šrḥb'l* is better explained if the horse is considered as having been cast during the second half of the fifth or in the beginning of the sixth century A.D., because of the reigns of the first two kings bearing this name.

We have, in addition, corroborative evidence in four Sabaean inscriptions engraved on the slopes of Čebel Balaq near the Yemenite city of Mâreb. Their lettering may be compared with that of C; but it is more advanced and consequently belongs to a later period. It is interesting to note that in one of them, Jamme 546, both single-line and double-line tracing was used, as in A. What is more important, however, is that they can unquestionably be dated about the middle of the sixth century A.D. because of the historical information in Jamme 545/2, the name of King 'Abraha,[24] and in Jamme 544/2–4, the Sabaean year 668, *circa* A.D. 558.[25]

[22] This inscription covers the pedestal of two bronze lions; a photograph has been published by G. W. Van Beek in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, XV (1952), p. 4, fig. 3. Its quotation is "T.S.(E)."

[23] This text (= T.S. 1120–1) is cut in depth on the base of a bronze statue representing a lady (= T.S. 1120–2).

[24] Cf., e.g., CIH 541/4.

[25] A. F. L. Beeston, *Problems of Sabaean Chronology*, BSOAS (XVI, 1954) 40.

For all these reasons, the Sabaean horse and its three inscriptions may be assigned to the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century A.D.

<div align="center">✿   ✿   ✿</div>

The fundamental connection of the horse and its three inscriptions cannot possibly be doubted. It is obvious that B belongs to the horse because it was cast at the same time; similarly A because of its content, and C because of its palaeographical resemblance to A.

This Sabaean horse is the first known bronze statue which can be attributed to the last Sabaean period, and more precisely, according to the above-mentioned evidence, to the end of the fifth century A.D. or to the beginning of the sixth.

This horse is also the first statue known to have been offered to the Christian God Raḥmanân.

Because of the discovery in Timnaʿ of small pieces of dried clay, which I identified as moulds for casting inscriptions,[26] it may readily be admitted that this horse was cast in South-Arabia, and not elsewhere.

The inscriptions B and C indicate respectively the name of the worker who made the horse, and the name of the engraver of text A. Text A mentions the offering to Raḥmanân, and indicates also the requests of the donor Hawfʿatat Yuha'din Gaymân which were the reasons for the offering.

The inscriptions B and C present letterings which are already known; but the palaeography of text A is extremely important because of the exciting form of *b* and *ḍ* compared with /, and also of *ġ* compared with *l*.

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[26] Jamme, *Pièces épigraphiques*, 212–213.